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HOW MUCH 'OVERSIGHT'?

Among the many recommendations made by the presidential commission which investigated the CIA, none is more apt to fall on willing ears on Capitol Hill than the suggestion for a joint congressional committee to oversee the spy agency.

Many lawmakers have grumbled for years that the CIA had become a law unto itself, unaccountable to regular government organs.

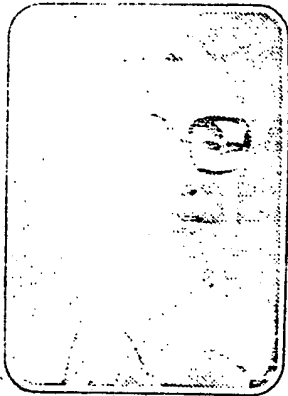
Now that their hankering for a closer look at the U.S. espionage apparatus has been endorsed by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller's panel, there will be no holding them back.

We hope that eagerness to exercise greater supervision over the CIA will not impel Congress to act rashly, or without due consideration for its own responsibilities in a supervisory role.

A strong and effective CIA is vital to our national security—and the CIA can be neither strong nor effective unless its plans and operations are kept secret. The more people who have access to hush-hush information, the greater the danger of leakage which would compromise agents and their activities.

Congress has a solemn obligation to proceed most carefully in determining the mandate of an intelligence committee, and how it will carry out its assignment.

Above all, it must exercise extreme caution in selecting committee members and staff aides to weed out blabbermouths and those who have made no bones of their desire to see the CIA done away with.



Vice President
Rockefeller

CIA's Snoop on Mail Is Hit by Postal Boss

By STEVEN MATTHEWS

Postmaster General Benjamin Bailar said yesterday that he considered the examination of mail by the Central Intelligence Agency to be "reprehensible," and he added that he had received written assurances from CIA director William Colby that the practice had stopped and there were "no plans to resume it."

Bailar disagreed, however, with the statement of the Rockefeller Commission that investigated the agency and revealed the secret operation Tuesday, that the practice had ended in 1973.

According to the postmaster general, who spoke to reporters following a speech here, no mail was opened after 1969, when a former CIA employee became aware of the snooping became chief postal inspector and ordered an end to the practice.

In his speech to the Postal Customers Council meeting at the Statler Hilton Hotel, Bailar disclosed that the Postal Service planned to boost rates on its own terms regardless of whether the vastly different recommendations of an administrative judge are implemented in the meantime.

He Assails Judge's Plea

He lambasted the plan of Judge Seymour Wennej to reduce first-class rates in favor of higher postage of other classes of mail, and indicated that the cost of mailing a first-class letter would probably rise to 12 or 13 cents.

Referring to reports that some of the letters that had been inspected had not actually been opened, but had been examined by technological methods, Bailar said that as far as he was concerned the CIA had at least "exceeded the spirit of the law."

He emphasized, though, that to his knowledge no domestic mail was even interfered with. The only letters the CIA was interest-

ed in during the more than 10 years the project was carried on were those bound for the Soviet Union and other overseas locations, Bailar said.

Holds His Ground

Under no circumstances would he agree to a resumption of the undercover spying, Bailar declared. From now on the CIA "can go to court and get a search warrant if they want to go into the mail," the postmaster general said.

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